

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 2318

EXDIS

E.O. 11625: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, UNSC, IS, LE, XF
SUBJ: URQUHART'S CONVERSATIONS IN BEIRUT

1. URQUHART (AN OLD FRIEND) TELEPHONED EVENING OF AUGUST 20 TO SAY HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS HIS AUGUST 19 TALKS IN BEIRUT AND UPCOMING MEETINGS WITH ESRAELIS. HE WAS DELIGHTED WHEN I TOLD HIM SAM LEWIS HAPPENED TO BE HAVING A DRINK AT THE HOUSE AND HE CAME ROUND FOR AN HOUR.

2. UPSHOT IS THAT HE PLANS TO PRESS GOI TO PRESS HADDAD AND SHIDIAK FOR UNIFIL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN THE ENCLAVES. (UN NOW HAS SOME 18 POSTS IN THE ENCLAVES IN ADDITION TO THE FIVE OP'S ALONG ADL. URQUHART SAYS ADDITIONAL POSTS WOULD BE USELESS UNLESS UN OBTAINS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT.) URQUHART SAID SARKIS IS ADAMANT LAF MUST GO TO TIBNIN AND NOWHERE ELSE. MOREOVER, HE INSISTS ON "IRONCLAD" GUARANTEES FROM US AND GOI THAT MILITIAS WILL NOT FIRE ON LAF. SINCE THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, URQUHART DOES NOT PLAN
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TO PRESS LAF DEPLOYMENT IN HIS TALKS HERE.

3. IN HIS VIEW, GREATER UNIFIL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, COUPLED WITH LAF COMPANY AT KAWKABA, WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO ACCOMPLISH RENEWAL OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE BY SEPTEMBER 19 WITHOUT DEFECTIONS FROM CONTRIBUTORS.

4. URQUHART FIRST MET WITH BOUTROS, KHOURY AND JOHNNY ABDO WHERE SITUATION ON THE GROUND WAS REVIEWED. HE GOT IMPRESSION THIS GROUP CONSIDERS SOUTH LEBANON OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE. HE THEN HAD PRIVATE MEETING WITH SARKIS, WHO WAS DEPRESSED. SARKIS MORE THAN BOUTROS AND KHOURY, SEEMED TO FEEL BLOCKAGE OF BATTALION WAS A PERSONAL CHALLENGE. EMOTIONALLY, HE BLAMED US FOR ALLEGEDLY HAVING MISLET GOL AND THEN CRITICIZED UN'S PERFORMANCE.

5. URQUHART REPLIED UNIFIL HAD DONE A BETTER JOB THAN ANY-ONE IMAGINED. OPERATION HAD RUN INTO UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES AND, SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE, THIS WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS. WAY MUST BE FOUND TO OVERCOME PRESENT IMPASSE RATHER THAN COMPOUNDING PRESENT PROBLEMS. HAVING UNBURDENED HIMSELF, SARKIS BECAME CALMER AND URGED URQUHART TO RETURN TO BEIRUT FOR FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WHICH HE PROMISED TO DO. URQUHART ADVISED AGAINST FORMAL SC MEETING AT THIS TIME, BUT SAID GOL MIGHT WISH TO CIRCULATE ITS VIEWS IN THE FORM OF A LETTER.

6. IN HIS MEETING WITH PM AL HOSS, URQUHART ADVISED HIM NOT TO CRITICIZE UNIFIL PUBLICLY. SUCH CRITICISM WAS NOT ONLY UNFAIR, BUT IT MIGHT CAUSE ARABS TO TURN AGAINST OPERATION HEREBY ENABLING SOVIETS TO CAST VETO DURING UPCOMING MEETING ON MANDATE RENEWAL. AL HOSS WAS REPORTEDLY APPALLED AT THIS PROSPECT.

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7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, AMBASSADOR LEWIS THOUGHT URQUHART COULD PRESS ISRAELIS FOR (A) MORE POSTS IN THE ENCLAVES AND, (B) FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. HE AGREED IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE PROFITABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON LAF REDEPLOYMENT GIVEN UNCERTAIN STATE OF GOL DELIBERATIONS. URQUHART RECOGNIZED ISRAELIS WOULD PRESS FOR ASSURANCE RE STATUS QUO OF THE "GOOD FENCE." WHILE INDICATING HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE NO IMMEDIATE EFFORT TO EFFECT A CHANGE, HE SAID HE COULD NOT GIVE ANY ASSURANCES AND THAT THIS PROBLEM WOULD HAVE TO BE FACED AT A LATER STAGE.

8. AT KAWKABA, WHICH HE HAD JUST VISITED, URQUHART FOUND LAF MORALE LOW. UNIT COMPOSED OF 60 PERCENT DRUZE, 20 PERCENT MOSLEMS, 20 PERCENT CHRISTIANS. PERSONNEL DID NOT PRESENT IMAGE OF A COHESIVE MILITARY UNIT WITH ANY ESPRIT. MEN WERE NOT DUG-IN BUT WERE SCATTERED AMONG HOUSES, SOME LIVING UNDER DOORSTEPS, ETC.

9. URQUHART DID NOT SEE EITHER HADDAD OR SHIDIAK. UNIFIL REPORTED HADDAD WAS IN A HIGHLY EMOTIONAL STATE. HE HAD REPEATEDLY THREATENED TO OPEN FIRE AT THE LEAST IMAGINED

PROVOCATION(E.G. ELECTRICITY OR WATER FAILURE). URQUHART
CONSIDERS THAT HADDAD AND ISRAELIS HAVE A SYMBIOTIC RELATION-
SHIP AND THAT ISRAEL CANNOT COMPLETELY CONTROL HIM OR
SHIDIAK.

10. URQUHART PLANS TO RETURN TO BEIRUT AUGUST 22 FOR
SECOND ROUND OF MEETINGS AND WILL COME BACK TO JERUSALEM
IN THE EVENING. HE SAID HE WOULD GIVE ME A FURTHER FILL-
IN BEFORE RETURNING TO NEW YORK IF TIME PERMITS.
NEWLIN

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